

Minutes of Waukesha County Airport Operations Commission
APRIL 10, 2013

Chairman Crowley called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Other Commissioners Present: Falstad, and Schoepke. Commissioners Richards and Bluemke excused.

Others Present: Lee Ward, Pilot; Samuel Cryer, PlaneSafe Aircraft; Druanne M Cryer, PlaneSafe Aircraft; Ken Witt, Midwest Air Traffic Control; Val Ramos, Airport Administration; Erik G Weidig, Corporation Counsel; Brian B Behrens, Spring City Aviation; Keith Van De Laarschot, hangar sale; Jim Singer, Flight For Life; Shawn McCauley, Quad/Graphics; Laurie Stein, Stein Aircraft Services; Harry Becker, Atlantic Aviation; Clara Daniels, Dept of Administration; and Kurt Stanich, Airport Manager.

Approve modify minutes of March 13, 2013

Motion to approve minutes of March 13, 2013 by Commissioner Falstad with second by Schoepke. Motion passed.

Public Comment/Correspondence

Stanich – There has been a lot of comment and correspondence regarding contract tower issues. This has been the main focus for the past month and will be discussed in Item 5 of today's meeting agenda.

Discussion and action on lease assignment between Waukesha County and Stein's Aircraft Services LLC for 2651 Aviation Drive –

Stanich – At a previous meeting the Commission approved a lease assignment between Select Leasing and Stein Aircraft Services, LLC. The lease for that assignment began in October 1999 through September 2019, a twenty year lease with extensions. In assigning the lease, the existing "Operating Agreement" Stein's had with the Airport for the last four years was incorporated into the agreement. The lease agreement was made to be consistent with the Flight For Life lease that is located next to 2651 Aviation Drive since both are aeronautical service providers. The agreement was reviewed and approved by Corporation Counsel prior to this meeting. Requesting Commission approval today for the lease assignment. Motion to approve by Commissioner Schoepke with second by Commissioner Falstad to approve upgraded lease assignment between Waukesha County and Stein's Aircraft Services, LLC. Motion passed.

Discussion and action on lease assignment between the Estate of George D Dalton and Behrens Hangar Leasing, LLC (526-528 Northview Road) –

Stanich – Received the Assignment and Assumption of Lease with Consent of Lessor document for 526-528 Northview Road. Behrens Hangar Leasing, LLC intends to use the hangar for aircraft storage. Prior to this meeting document was reviewed by Corporation Counsel with a few changes that were requested to be incorporated. The changes were made as requested and now requesting approval by the Commission for the assignment. Motion to approve by Commissioner Falstad with second by Commissioner Schoepke. Motion passed.

Discussion on June 15, 2013 Air Traffic Control Tower Closure –

Commissioner Crowley – Requested Mr. Stanich to give a timeline and action taken regarding this issue. This past Wednesday Chairman Crowley joined County Executive Vrakas and his Chief of Staff on a tour of the Airport Control Tower. Ken Witt, Chief Traffic Controller was present and gave quite an informative review of what could potentially transpire if the tower closures were to happen. Mr. Witt said airspace is certainly one of the biggest safety concerns.

Chairman Crowley read from the timeline (attached) provided by Mr. Stanich. (The Commissioners received copies of the timeline.)

Crowley – Senator Moran (R-KS) is introducing a bill to the Senate this week that, if passed would require the FAA to keep all contract towers open. This is Senator Moran's second attempt at legislation aimed at reversing the FAA's decision. The County Executive has been kept up to date on the status of the tower closures and he has been in communications with the Governor's office on this matter. Everything is being done to have a plan in place to continue to fund the tower. Safety is not the only issue here. The tower closing will have a drastic affect the economic development as well as the aviation and business community. This was emphasized with the County Executive during his tower tour last Wednesday. A safety meeting will be held April 22, 2013 in the airport conference room to address concerns for uncontrolled airspace. Thank you to everyone that submitted comments to the FAA and wrote letters to elected officials to keep the towers open.

Stanich – Safety meeting scheduled for April 22nd to address things to watch out for; how to operate in uncontrolled air space; change over issues between having a tower/not having a tower; addressing safety concerns/issues from pilots, corporations, anyone in the area concerned with changes in the air space. Our hope is the closures will not happen, but we need to be prepared in any event. Thanks again to everyone for their support of our tower. Ken and the controllers have been working tirelessly to keep the tower open. Lots of feedback has been received from Congressmen and Senators and this really helps our case.

Crowley – Open to Commissioners for discussion.

Falstad – Are our elected representatives supportive of our position on this and will they support the bill submitted by Senator Moran?

Crowley – Our local representatives are in support of the tower as is the Governor.

Falstad – We would expect our Senators to be in support of this bill.

Crowley – Senator Baldwin is in favor, but official word has not been received. With Senator Johnson we do not know how he feels about it. Hopefully this summary was detailed to provide the Commissioners with a good understanding of the tower issue. County Executive is trying to find ways with his administration of what can be done within the County.

Reminder to the Commission and the aviation community that the Airport Operations Commission is a recommending body that was formed by the County Executive and only has so much power as far as making decisions. Formalities such as ordinances, lease assignments/agreements and other activity may be approved and then forwarded to the County Board. Commissioners may contact and work with the County Executive if there is an issue they feel very strongly about.

Schoepke - In the timeline the correspondence became very sudden. Was there correspondence prior to this that could have allowed more time to work through this? During the debt ceiling discussions there must have been something in the Sequestration Bill as that time.

Stanich – Through the debt ceiling debate there was that discussion and what I have heard from the Congress and Senate is that the FAA decided at that time to put into the Sequestration that they would reduce funding of the federal contract tower program. Unfortunately no one (aviation industry or Washington) took the Sequestration seriously until it came to the point this was going to be implemented. This is when the communications started coming in. The Airport relies on the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and the U.S. Contract Tower Program to provide us with Washington correspondence and to interpret legislation. I don't think anyone, even the FAA, believed this would actually happen. Letters started coming from the FAA that the towers were closing. FAA received questions from the aviation industry of how this was going to be done. The FAA responded with a four page document explaining the closings, what changes would occur, they were there for support but payment would be required. More questions were sent to the FAA and the FAA continued sending out more letters detailing what towers would be closed, and when they would be closed. It caught the aviation industry by surprise because no one believed it would happen.

Schoepke – Was the notice the FAA sent received here at the Airport or did it go to another County Department?

Stanich – Word was originally received by AAAE that the notices were going out and we received a template. The actual notice was sent to the County at 1320 Pewaukee Road because the County owns the airport facilities. It was inter-officed the same day, there was no delay in delivery of the notice and communication between the County and the Airport.

Schoepke – It is a good idea to have a plan in place because this is probably not going to go away. It will continue to be a conflicting battle and we should be prepared for the future.

Crowley – Open to public for comments

Witt – Thank you to everyone in the airport community for their support and letters. Initially there was instruction from the U.S. Contract Tower Association not to progress to the municipal level right away. They did not want to discuss the closings on a municipal level immediately because they did not want the FAA and Washington hearing that municipalities were discussing taking over the towers and just let them close.

Crowley – Safety is the biggest concern in closing the towers. It will have a huge economic impact on Waukesha County and Waukesha County Airport if the tower is not funded in some way. We have already lost one controller because of this situation.

Laurie Stein – This is still a very active situation. I was contacted last night by Congressman Duffy's office about the tower closing. All of our Representatives have been contacted from the local, State and national level. We have shared what we foresee as our financial impact to our business with Governor Walker's office. There are still many people working on this and I feel very optimistic about this and that common sense will prevail in this situation.

Crowley – Thank you, Laurie, for all of your efforts.

Sam Cryer – Out in the community the public perception is that if the tower closes we become an unsafe airport. This translates into: are people going to come to our airport for functions, events, new students learning to fly or come in for maintenance on their aircraft? Mr. Cryer hears comments everyday, if the tower closes are aircraft going to be flying into each other.

Laurie Stein – We need to get the public to understand that pilots can still fly without a tower. This has been a concern for our clients also.

Witt – There has been a lot of chastising about towers closing. At Sensenbrenner meeting in Watertown a pilot said he flies in and out of Watertown all the time, there is no tower there and it is perfectly safe. The message has to be made that safety will be reduced, not lost.

Becker – Glad to hear the County Executive is joining in the lawsuit. The lawsuit is important because it will force them into a due diligence. The State may want to keep all airport towers open but don't think that is going to happen and we have to be more proactive for our airport because this is our interest. In our situation if we get the FAA to evaluate the airport on its merits and not budget cut we will do better and force them to look at the numbers and look at the traffic. From a Commission level putting pressure on the County Executive is important to have him move in those directions because his name is all over the airport, "Waukesha County Airport", and we will get more support from Senators and Congressmen if they are hearing that from the County Executive.

Crowley – Thank you to everyone for their comments.

Stanich – Also happy to hear the lawsuit is moving forward because what he has been hearing from the FAA is: "We don't care what you think about how we came to this decision we only care of how you will move forward with this decision."

Schoepke – Regarding the lawsuit, hope that it is coming from an angle that is very procedural in that these procedures that are being mandated to us are unfair. We need time to do what is being asked.

Stanich – The lawsuit states that the FAA did not follow their own mandated safety management system for making decisions. In the conference call with the FAA, they said they did an in depth study and review of every airport. Ken and I looked at each other because we never saw anybody, were not contacted by anybody, and there was no communication from anybody. As an airport community we do not think due diligence was done on their part.

McCauley – Agree with Mr. Stanich that we will get through this, but it will not be the last time we deal with this. Money will be an increasing battle and we need to look for alternate money methods for the tower long term. There is a very strong case made for this airport specifically, far stronger than the other towers in the State. The decision to close this airport is colossal. This tower is colossal. While there may be some towers that will be difficult to justify their expenditures, there should be no problem justifying expenditures for this airport.

Chairman's Report

None

Airport Manager's Report

Traffic Activity - Tower activity is down significantly, 23% reduction over the previous year month to month, and 29% reduction year to date. We need to make this airport a destination airport as discussed in previous meetings. The tower is a big part of the airport so I would ask that the Commission and elected officials keep in mind that without a tower these

numbers will be further reduced, which reduces our standing in the national and also the State airport system. This affects funding in the future and it affects what we can do as an airport to make this a good destination, and recruit not just pilots but also the community and different events at the airport.

Fuel Report – Looking at the fuel flowage report, though we are down compared to March 2012, we are up year to date and the gallons per operation have increased significantly. People that are flying in are buying more fuel from us. This is the direction the County wants us to grow in, corporate jet direction, while also growing our general aviation community.

Runway Safety Action Team Meeting – The meeting took place March 26th with good discussion mainly focused on construction and items that will be taken care of during the construction season coming up.

Broom Truck Update – The parts ordered for the truck came in. Snow Patrol is covering cost of damages to the truck estimated at \$20,000.

Marketing – Focus has been on the control tower issue. Tracy from StrateVantage has been tremendous in being up to date and helping to get newsletters together and making sure messaging is consistent not just with the Commission but also on the local elected and national scene.

New lighting control panel – The Delta/Fox Trot Taxiway Project will be coming up in May. The project involves redoing the pavement for the two taxiways. Part of the project was getting a new lighting control panel between the vault and the control tower. The line was installed in November of 2012. The brand new lighting system will be in the control tower. We are investigating some changes so that the lights can be remotely controlled from the terminal building so that we don't have to run over to the tower every time the lights have to turn on and off. That's part of the operational consideration that we have to take into account if the tower does close down; how do we operate the airport without a huge impact on our operation.

Operations Assistant – Person has been hired for the position, start date is April 15th. Alan Graff, with ten years of experience at Dane County Airport in Madison.

Airfield repairs – Working on airfield repairs, lots of lights down. Snow Patrol was pretty hard on the airfield this snow season. They also put in a number of ruts in different areas of the airfield. They will be paying for all of the repairs.

Capital Projects – Met with the State the 20th of March. Taking a total between what the State has for capital projects and the what the County has scheduled, finding there is a bit of a difference also different priorities between Federal funding saying we need the safety area project and saying this is an airport we need the runway first because there are some food issues out there. We are reprioritizing and shifting things to be as creative and careful as we can with the money we are allotted for these projects.

Event Updates – Bonanza Pilot Proficiency Program for the weekend of May 5th. Good boost for the airport with fuel sales and lots of operations. WOW planning continues for August 24th and 25th. Air show updates: Gene Soucy, and Trojan Horsemen. Fundraiser on April 26th – Bingo Night at Steve Betzler's hangar.

Crowley – Update on current fuel prices by Harry Becker.

Becker – Jet is \$6.19; 100LL \$6.50 and for based customers coming to Atlantic it is \$5.83. Fuel prices were affected by the February weather.

Future Agenda Items -

None

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Falstad with a second by Schoepke. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned 9:00 a.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A Crowley
Chairman Airport Operations Commission
April 10, 2013